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Groups of countries in special situations: follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Thailand:* draft resolution

Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[2] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Reaffirming also its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

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for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming further its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Recognizing the internationally agreed outcomes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the Paris Agreement,[3]

Recalling the Political Declaration adopted by the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 29 May 2016, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/294 of 25 July 2016, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Declaration,

Recalling also its resolution 70/216 of 22 December 2015 on the follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Recalling further Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/15 of 26 July 2016 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Recalling its resolution 67/221 of 21 December 2012 on the smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

Taking note of the first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016,

Taking note also of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, entitled "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants",[4] as well as annex I (Comprehensive refugee response framework) and annex II (Towards a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration) thereto, adopted at the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held in New York on 19 September 2016,

Taking note further of the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade

[3] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.
[4] Resolution 71/1.

2011-2020[5] and the report of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, entitled "State of the Least Developed Countries, 2016";

2. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to further intensify their efforts to fully and effectively implement, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner, the commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] in its eight priority areas, namely: (a) productive capacity; (b) agriculture, food security and rural development; (c) trade; (d) commodities; (e) human and social development; (f) multiple crises and other emerging challenges; (g) mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building; and (h) good governance at all levels;

3. *Welcomes* the progress in, and stresses the importance of, mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into the development cooperation frameworks of development partners, and calls upon the development partners to further integrate the Istanbul Programme of Action into their respective national cooperation policy frameworks, programmes and activities, as appropriate, to ensure enhanced, predictable and targeted support to the least developed countries, as set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[6] and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development[7] and the delivery of their commitments, and to consider appropriate measures to overcome shortfalls or shortcomings, if any;

4. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence, in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

5. *Notes with appreciation* that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda incorporate a number of key development challenges and priorities for the least developed countries, including the provision of enhanced resources, the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries and an investment promotion regime for the least developed countries;

6. *Welcomes* the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[3] and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030[8] underscore that the most vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries, deserve special attention and reflect the concerns and aspirations of the least developed countries, recalls the decision contained in the 2030 Agenda that effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on the least developed countries, underlines the importance of strong synergy in the implementation of the recently adopted agendas and the Istanbul Programme of

[5] A/71/66-E/2016/11.
[6] Resolution 70/1.
[7] Resolution 69/313, annex.
[8] Resolution 69/283, annex II.

Action at the national and subnational levels, and encourages coordination and coherence in the follow-up of their implementation;

7. *Reaffirms* that the least developed countries, as the most vulnerable group of countries, need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard calls upon the international community to prioritize and strengthen support from all sources to facilitate the coordinated implementation and coherent follow-up to and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in the least developed countries;

8. *Expresses its concern* that, in the context of the overall slowdown in the international economy, the least developed countries as a group are experiencing a slowdown in their economies, with growth rates falling from 5.1 per cent in 2014 to an estimated 4.5 per cent in 2015,[9] which is significantly lower than the growth rate achieved between 2001 and 2010 and falls far short of the Sustainable Development Goal target of at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum[10] in the near term, and that those countries that are highly dependent on commodity exports have seen a pronounced decline in their export earnings and gross domestic product growth;

9. *Also expresses its concern* that official development assistance (ODA) commitments have not been fulfilled, and reiterates that the fulfilment of all ODA commitments remains crucial to achieving sustainable development, and that ODA providers reaffirm their respective ODA commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, expresses its encouragement at those few countries that have met or surpassed their commitment to 0.7 per cent of GNI for ODA to developing countries and the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, urges all others to step up efforts to increase their ODA and to make additional concrete efforts towards the ODA targets, encourages ODA providers to consider setting targets to provide at least 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries, and expresses its encouragement at those which are allocating at least 50 per cent of their ODA to the least developed countries;

10. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the decision by the European Union, in which it reaffirmed its collective commitment to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of GNI for ODA to developing countries within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and undertook to meet collectively the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries in the short term and to reach 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA to the least developed countries within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda;

11. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of

[9] *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.II.C.2).

[10] Target 8.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation, which is a complement to but not a substitute for North-South cooperation;

12. *Expresses deep concern* that, in 2015, merchandise exports of the least developed countries contracted by 25 per cent, a significantly bigger drop than in 2014 and that as a result, the share of least developed countries in world merchandise exports decreased to 0.97 per cent, and therefore calls upon the members of the World Trade Organization to address the marginalization of the least developed countries in international trade and to improve their effective participation in the multilateral trading system, and to fully implement all the provisions specific to the least developed countries contained in the existing World Trade Organization agreements, ministerial decisions and declarations, including the 2015 World Trade Organization Ministerial Decision on the implementation of preferential treatment in favour of services and service suppliers of the least developed countries and increasing the participation of the least developed countries in services trade;

13. *Calls upon* developed country and developing country World Trade Organization members declaring themselves in a position to do so to realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all products originating from all the least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, and also calls upon them to take steps to facilitate market access for products of the least developed countries, including by developing simple and transparent rules of origin applicable to imports from the least developed countries, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by World Trade Organization members at the Bali ministerial conference in 2013;

14. *Calls upon* the development partners to realize their commitments to increase aid for trade support, in particular for the least developed countries, and to allocate an increasing proportion of aid for trade to the least developed countries;

15. *Stresses* the need for the international community to remain vigilant in monitoring the debt situation of the least developed countries and to continue to take effective measures, preferably within existing frameworks, when applicable, to address the debt problems of those countries, including through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management, as appropriate, for the multilateral and bilateral debt owed by the least developed countries to creditors, both public and private, reiterates the commitment to work through existing initiatives, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and reaffirms the importance of transparency in debt management;

16. *Recognizes* that commodity diversification and value addition, as well as the effective participation of the least developed countries in regional and global value chains and in international trade in agricultural products, is a critical aspect of the efforts of those countries in reversing their marginalization, building productive capacities, accelerating structural transformation and generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, with a rapid and sustainable impact on poverty eradication;

17. *Invites* multilateral development banks and other international development banks to finance sustainable development and provide know-how to the least developed countries;

18. *Recalls* the decision contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 67/220 of 21 December 2012 to adopt, expand and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries, welcomes the decision contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries and the offer to provide financial and technical support for project preparation and contract negotiation, advisory support in investment-related dispute resolution mechanism, access to information on investment facilities and risk insurance and guarantees such as through the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency;

19. *Reiterates* its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to include the issue of investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries in the agenda of the Board, with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of United Nations system support that can contribute to enhancing the flow of foreign direct investment to the least developed countries and the ability of those countries to attract such investment, invites the Economic and Social Council, at its next annual forum on financing for development follow-up, to discuss the adoption and implementation of investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries, pursuant to the relevant resolutions on the matter, including General Assembly resolution 69/313 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the mandate of the annual forum on financing for development follow-up set out therein, and recalls that the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the forum will inform the overall follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

20. *Requests*, in this regard, the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly on the progress made on the issue of investment promotion regimes with a view to establishing an international investment support centre for the least developed countries under the auspices of the United Nations to provide a one-stop arrangement to help stimulate foreign direct investment in the least developed countries;

21. *Expresses its deep concern* that, owing to significant capacity constraints, the least developed countries are disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change, including persistent drought and extreme weather events, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, glacier lake outburst floods, ocean acidification and the rise in frequency, as well as the impact, of natural and man-made disasters, which further threaten food security and efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development;

22. *Underlines* the need to reduce the vulnerability of the least developed countries to economic, natural and environmental shocks and disasters, as well as climate change, and to enhance their ability to meet these and other challenges by strengthening their resilience, and in this regard stresses that it is important that all countries and other actors work together to further develop and implement concrete measures in a timely manner at the national and international levels so as to build the resilience of the least developed countries to withstand economic shocks and mitigate their adverse effects, to withstand and overcome the adverse effects of climate change, to enhance sustainable growth and protect biodiversity and to

withstand natural hazards in order to reduce the risk of disasters, as agreed upon in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

23. *Recalls* the decision contained in the Political Declaration of the Midterm Review to undertake an in-depth analysis on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries, at the national and international levels, with a view to building and further strengthening crisis mitigation and resilience in the least developed countries, and the request to the General Assembly to determine the parameters of this analysis at its seventy-first session, and decides that the analysis should focus, inter alia, on the following issues:

(a) Stocktaking of various shocks, including natural disasters, economic crises and health epidemics and their disproportionate impacts on the sustainable development of the least developed countries;

(b) Reviewing the current national, regional and international landscape to better equip the least developed countries against shocks and their effectiveness;

(c) Making recommendations on a possible risk-management mechanism at the subnational, national, regional and global levels to combine ex ante preparations for risk with the ex post ability to cope with such risk;

(d) Examining and outlining potential functions, activities, working methods, governance mechanisms, staffing arrangements and costs for a crisis-mitigation and resilience-building mechanism for the least developed countries;

(e) Elaborating on how the international community, including developed and developing countries, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations can support the resilience-building mechanism for the least developed countries;

(f) Examining how the private sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders, as well as local knowledge and community involvement, can contribute to resilience-building for the least developed countries through the provision of insurance, the creation of employment, awareness-raising and other measures;

24. *Welcomes* the fact that the Paris Agreement can play an important role in the transformation to low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient societies and help to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change, taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of those developing country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change;

25. *Calls for* effective delivery on climate change commitments and access for the least developed countries to all relevant climate change-related funds, as applicable;

26. *Welcomes* the decisions of the Board of the Green Climate Fund to aim for a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation over time on a grant-equivalent basis and a floor of 50 per cent of the adaptation allocation for particularly vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries, welcomes the recent pledges to the Least Developed Countries Fund at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, calls upon the developed countries to continue to provide support

to vulnerable countries, including the least developed countries, to address their adaptation needs, and encourages other parties to the Framework Convention to provide or continue to provide such support voluntarily;

27. *Notes with appreciation* that several least developed countries have expressed their intention to reach the status of graduation by 2020, invites them to start the preparations for their graduation and transition strategy, and requests all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, led by the Office of the High Representative, to extend necessary support in this regard, in a coordinated manner;

28. *Notes*, in this regard, the convening of the Ministerial Conference on New Partnerships for Productive Capacity-Building in the Least Developed Countries, held in Cotonou, Benin, from 28 to 31 July 2014, the Ministerial Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Least Developed Countries on Graduation and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, held in Kathmandu from 16 to 18 December 2014, and the Ministerial Meeting of the African Least Developed Countries on Structural Transformation, Graduation and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, held in Milan, Italy, from 8 to 10 June 2015;

29. *Reiterates its recommendation* that the consultative mechanism specified in its resolution 59/209 of 20 December 2004 be established by the graduating country, in cooperation with its bilateral and multilateral development and trading partners, to facilitate the preparation of the transition strategy and the identification of the associated actions and the negotiation of their duration and phasing-out for a period appropriate to the development situation of the country, and that it be integrated into other relevant consultative processes and initiatives between the graduating country and its development partners;

30. *Invites* development partners to make available timely information about country-specific support measures and related smooth transition measures for the least developed countries in the areas of financial support, technical assistance and trade-related measures, including their time frames, characteristics and modalities;

31. *Welcomes* the establishment and the adoption of the Charter of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries[11] and reaffirms its commitment to fully operationalize it by 2017;

32. *Invites* development partners, including international multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, development finance institutions and cooperation agencies to provide financial support, including through innovative financial mechanisms, to programmes and projects to implement the New Urban Agenda, particularly in the least developed countries;

33. *Encourages* the least developed countries, in accordance with their national plans and priorities and with the full support of their development partners, to develop their capacities to track financial transactions, administer taxation, regulate customs and redouble efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, with a view to eventually eliminating them, including by combating tax evasion and corruption, and also encourages the United Nations and other relevant international bodies to help strengthen tax systems in the least developed countries

[11] See A/71/363.

and facilitate the strengthening of regulatory frameworks at all levels to help tackle illicit financial flows, capital flight and tax evasion, in accordance with their respective mandates;

34. *Expresses its serious concern* at the fact that the share of expenditure for the operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the least developed countries is declining, takes note of decisions 2012/1 of 3 February 2012 and 2012/28 of 10 September 2012 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, in which the Executive Board reiterated the allocation to the least developed countries of a minimum of 60 per cent of its target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC-1) resources, and decision 2016/11 of 16 September 2016 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund reiterating that the least developed countries must receive at least 60 per cent of its regular resources, and invites the governing bodies of other organizations of the United Nations development system and other multilateral organizations to prioritize allocations to the least developed countries, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates;

35. *Recognizes* that the activities relating to the least developed countries carried out within the Secretariat need to be further coordinated and consolidated in order to ensure effective monitoring and follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action, led by the Office of the High Representative, and to provide well-coordinated support to realizing the goal of enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

36. *Takes note of* the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for the least developed countries, led by the Office of the High Representative, also takes note of the finalization by the Office of the High Representative of the toolkit for mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into the work programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system, which was considered by the High-Level Committee on Programmes and taken note of by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination,[12] notes the steps taken by the Chief Executives Board and the High-level Committee in supporting coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action on a system-wide basis, also reiterates its invitation to the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to include implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the agenda of the Board, and requests the Secretary-General to report on further progress made in this regard;

37. *Underlines* the need to give particular attention to the issues and concerns of the least developed countries in all major United Nations conferences and processes;

38. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to include the issues of concern to the least developed countries in all relevant reports in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, in order to support the implementation of the goals set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

39. *Strongly encourages* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the Trust

[12] See http://unohrlls.org/mainstreamingtheipoa/.

Fund in Support of Activities Undertaken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the participation of the representatives from the least developed countries in the annual review meeting on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action by the Economic and Social Council as well as in other relevant forums, and in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund;

40. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and the Istanbul Programme of Action and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session, under the item entitled "Groups of countries in special situations", the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries".